

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 865

By Pitts

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Mercy Yrabedra of
Clarksville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Mercy Yrabedra; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Yrabedra was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Mercy Yrabedra served with acumen and alacrity as an educator for forty years and director of the Academy of Academic Excellence for twenty years, in which position she earned the respect of her colleagues, students, and parents for her exemplary leadership and inspiring teaching methods; and

WHEREAS, a Clarksville native, she was early on diagnosed with polio, an illness she would battle all her life, but because of which, she would develop an uncommon determination and resolve, never to be held back by the limitations of her health; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Yrabedra's strength and hard work led her to become the first female military officer at Hialeah High School in Miami, Florida, where she served as student conductor of the high school band; and

WHEREAS, during college, one of her professors would inspire her to pursue teaching, and she began teaching music as a band director at New Providence Middle School, where she served from 1972-1976 and led the band to perform in the national bicentennial celebration in Orlando, Florida; and

WHEREAS, she later served as band director at Clarksville High School from 1976 to 1983, at which point she resigned due to health complications; and

WHEREAS, even as she focused on her own recovery, Ms. Yrabedra maintained a passion for teaching and would reach out to homebound students, struggling with their own illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Mercy Yrabedra's greatest legacy is the Academy of Academic Excellence (AAE), which she founded in 1992; and

WHEREAS, AAE is a pre-K-12, Tennessee-accredited school, best known for its innovative work with autistic children, that is tailored to regular and special education students; and

WHEREAS, her work with this program transformed the lives of special needs students and their families and helped these individuals to reach their full potential through the same diligence and confidence with which Ms. Yrabedra overcame her own challenges in life; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her efforts at AAE, Mercy Yrabedra was actively involved in the Dream Factory, a non-profit organization that fulfills the dreams of seriously ill children, and was co-director of Camp Rainbow, a camp that serves children whose severe health issues prevent their attendance at other camps; and

WHEREAS, an inspiring role model to all who had the privilege of knowing her, Ms. Yrabedra made the most of her life through her work and hobbies that included music, boating, fishing, and countless other activities; and

WHEREAS, she will be greatly missed by her son, Blake; the staff and faculty of AAE; her students; and the community she served for so many years; and

WHEREAS, Mercy Yrabedra leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Mercy Yrabedra, reflecting fondly upon her

impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Ms. Yravedra.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.